

Abbot & Kloss found that the birds from Car Nicobar had brown irides, while all from the central Nicobars and from the Great and Little Nicobar had white ones. I have referred to this in my paper on the birds of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (*J. Bom. nat. Hist. Soc.* 61: 552) but was then unable to offer any comments. I visited the Nicobars again this year and 19 specimens obtained in Great and Central Nicobar had their irides white, while six from Car Nicobar had them brown. Many others in all these places and around Port Blair were observed through binoculars and the difference in eye colour was confirmed.

I have been unable to link this with any difference in any other character, though there is a slight downward cline in size of wing and bill as one proceeds southwards.

In several instances, birds in immature plumage and of both sexes were shot from the same flock and they all had their irides of the same colour as the adults.

Under the circumstances, there can be little doubt that the Glossy Stare from the Andamans (which is the type locality of *tytleri*) and from Car Nicobar can be separated from those from the Nicobar Islands further south by the former having their irides brown and the latter white.

I therefore name the birds from Kamorta, Trinkut, Nankauri and Great Nicobar

*Aplonis panayensis albiris* subsp. nov.

*Type*: No. 22410 in the Bombay Natural History Society's collection. Collected by Humayun Abdulali at Campbell Bay, Great Nicobar, 1st March, 1966.

*Co-types*: Nos. 22408, 22409 and 22411-22426, 11 males and 7 females collected in the Central Nicobars (10) and in Great Nicobar (8).

As implied earlier, I have little doubt that this form occurs over all the other islands in the Nicobars south of Car Nicobar, but since racial differences have arisen in this species on adjacent islands, the identity of birds from Nicobar islands other than those mentioned by me may be determined by future observers.

## Nest and eggs of *Buccanodon anchietae*

by ROBERT B. PAYNE

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The Yellow-headed Barbet, *Buccanodon anchietae* Bocage, is a little-known bird of open woodland in central Africa. No nest or eggs of the species appear to have been described, although Benson and White (1957: 160) list an unpublished record of five young in a nest in northern Zambia. On 23rd September 1966 a nest was found at Lukolwe Mission in north-western Zambia (13° 10' S, 22° 49' E). A pair of the barbets perched near a nest hole 18 feet high in a dead tree. Only one visit to the hole was made by a barbet in five hours of observation. The birds spent their time perched lethargically on limbs. Most of the time the two were together, and when one left the other remained until it returned. Courtship feeding with the transfer of unidentified food was seen once, and as in

several instances of display on this day the bird offering the food bobbed its head and body up and down as it faced the other bird. The second barbet bobbed up as the first bobbed down. The display continued at a rate of two bobs per second for four or five seconds. On the next day a single barbet was seen in the tree most of the time, and no displays were seen in four hours. The only vocalization heard from the barbets was a soft "churr" given after a Little Banded Goshawk (*Accipiter badius*) flew into the nearest tree. The pair of barbets roosted together in the nest this night even though the behaviour of the birds suggested that incubation had begun. One flew into the hole shortly after sunset and peered out at intervals, and the second bird joined it 20 minutes later. The two barbets were collected in late afternoon on the following day.

The nest hole was round and only slightly larger than a barbet. From the opening a tunnel slanted in and down at a 30° angle with the limb. At a depth of ten inches the tunnel broadened into a pear-shaped nest chamber, which was eight inches deep and four inches in diameter. In cross section this chamber was similar to two overlapping circles of the same size as a pair of vertical ridges partially partitioned the cavity. The floor was covered with fine chips of wood.

The four slightly glossy, white eggs measured 23.2 x 17.7 mm., 22.7 x 17.6 mm., 24.0 x 17.6 mm., and 22.7 x 17.7 mm. Two eggs weighed 3.8 and 3.7 gm. The eggs showed well-developed primitive streaks on the surface of the yolk, indicating that they had been incubated for 24 to 48 hours.

The male barbet weighed 43.4 gm. and the female 48.0 gm. Both had bark beetles in their stomachs: one bird was seen to catch flying beetles in the air from its perch on the nest tree. The yellow face of the female was stained with mulberry juice, and in the lower intestine of the male were two pits of drupe fruits about 3 mm. in diameter. These fruits came from a green, leafless, herbaceous vine known in the Lovale language as "Iwa-vava". The testes measured 6 x 5 and 4.5 x 4 mm. The ovary showed only small whitish follicles of 2 mm. or smaller and also four post-ovulatory follicles ranging in length from 2 mm. to 4 mm. These corresponded in number and size to a clutch in which the last egg was ovulated two days previously.

#### References:

Benson, C. W., and White, C. M. N. 1957. *Check List of the Birds of Northern Rhodesia*, Government Printer, Lusaka.

## Some Antillean coots (*Fulica*) in the Cambridge University and British Museums

by ALLAN R. PHILLIPS

Received 28th November, 1966

Recently Brodkorb (1965) described *Fulica podagrica*, "of apparently late Pleistocene age", from Barbados, West Indies. He drew attention to the need to re-examine the specimen from that island reported as *F. americana* by Feilden (1889), which, however, he thought "may no longer be in existence". This was therefore among the specimens I sought on my recent visit to England, made possible by a grant from the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund of the American Museum of Natural History.